

STREAMLINING CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

Streamlined Integrated Service Delivery Model--DRAFT

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), envisions a streamlined, demand-driven, and business-informed system that can support the education, training, and workforce needs of a diverse population of jobseekers and workers, including those most in need. Businesses, jobseekers, entrepreneurs, and Washington's workforce system partners benefit from an integrated service delivery model that brings together the expertise of partners skilled in serving all customer communities.

In many ways, streamlining the delivery system is the first step in helping all of the state's workers gain a foothold in Washington's economic recovery. Finding more efficient and successful ways to engage customers will help businesses fully tap the talent pipeline. The diverse populations served by the state's workforce system include unemployed or underemployed people, those seeking additional education to advance their careers, highly skilled workers who have lost their jobs, and those facing language barriers, poverty, and the hiring stigma that comes with previous incarceration. Some populations will require multiple resources, while others may pass through the system with minimal support. The state's economy benefits when the entire workforce is engaged in productive, meaningful employment. And the state's business community is more competitive and prosperous as a result.

So what does "Integrated Service Delivery" mean? Overall, it's a model where customers can access the state's workforce system, at any level, and are able to obtain the appropriate mix of services to put them on a pathway to economic self-sufficiency. With this model, customers connect to the system immediately through a common intake process. They meet, or are connected technologically, with someone with a broad knowledge of the available education, training, and support services and who can help them navigate these choices. These trained system navigators ensure customers have a roadmap to economic self-sufficiency, including facilitated "hand-offs" to relevant service providers.

Serving everyone seamlessly

The system's goal is to ensure that every customer has the education, employability skills, work experience, and credentials needed to move into sustained employment and economic self-sufficiency, and receives the wraparound services needed to pursue his or her career pathway.

Greater Flexibility and Follow Up

Integrated service delivery also offers greater flexibility and a better fit for people who may need skill-specific training or other intensive services right from the start, rather than moving more deliberately through a predetermined, sequence of steps. Some customers also benefit from enrolling in one or more services at the same time. Finally, integrated service delivery features follow-up coaching, where needed, to help each person succeed in preparing for a job, obtaining a job, keeping a job, and progressing on the job.

An integrated delivery model requires agency and community partners to quickly identify needs, then match resources to meet those needs. Increased collaboration and coordination among system partners ensures that the best of what the system has to offer comes forward with a minimum of duplication. This model should also be viewed as a flexible, interconnected set of services tailored to each customer. Under this delivery model, customers receive a range of services via various providers and funding streams that may be braided together to meet their specific needs.

The career pathway approach connects levels of education, training, counseling, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way that optimizes continuous progress towards the education, employment, and career goals of individuals of all ages, abilities, and needs. Career pathways fully engage businesses to help meet their workforce needs. In turn, customers are encouraged to choose among a full range of education and work-based learning opportunities that allows them to earn marketable credentials. Ultimately, the goal is to connect the customer to a career pathway that taps their talents and leads to long-term economic security.

Streamlining Intake and Triage

A critical goal of integrated service delivery is to provide customers a streamlined intake process that quickly connects them to relevant services and subsequent wrap-around support, customized to their specific needs. This requires staff to move beyond being experts in the programs they administer to thinking holistically about customers, their goals, and their skill-sets when they enter the system. The approach to the customer should be asset-based, focusing first on the strengths and positive experiences that the customer brings, and helping the individual build on those assets.

Streamlining customer intake means taking targeted information from a participant on day one to place them in a program, or mixture of programs, that will—at a minimum—meet their immediate needs. New participants, particularly individuals with barriers to employment,

should experience connection and the feeling of momentum or forward movement beginning on the first day. Finding the right program fit can occur in subsequent visits, but the customer should not be bombarded with duplicative requests for information or skills assessments. Staff must be “Navigators” who help people design individual career pathways and then assist them in finding an economically self-sustaining route forward. Partners will need to work together differently, including at points of transition (hand-offs) between organizations, the points of co-servicing (participant receiving multiple services from multiple organizations at the same time), and in the way they manage funding and services braided across organizations.

Professional Development

An integrated service delivery model requires a system-wide emphasis on professional development and cross-training for both leadership and front-line staff. Professional development that cuts across all programs and strategies is a foundational element of system accessibility. Training should include: outreach; the intake and triage process; customer choice; coaching and navigation; asset-based programming; and broad and basic knowledge of workforce education and training programs. Key skills for frontline staff will include cultural competency, technical fluency, and command of motivational interviewing techniques. These core skills will significantly improve outcomes by connecting customers to the workforce system. Training will ensure staff is able to serve a diverse population who experience a wide range of barriers to employment and require an array of integrated services to be successful along their career pathways.

Cross-training

The first requirement for front-line service staff at all intake points is to be knowledgeable of the programs and services available across the system. Staff will also need to contact and seek additional information from each service provider to ensure clients receive the most accurate information. To that end, it’s critical that staff receive ongoing orientation (even cross-training) about the programs and services available to customers across the system.

Customer Choice and Asset-based Programming

This customer-centric model honors the assets and interests of customers at every stage of service delivery. The model recognizes the needs and interests of customers may change as they engage in services, learn more about their abilities and aptitudes, and consider new career options. Customers help shape their service plans to achieve desired outcomes, with periodic check-ins and adjustments to ensure their plans continue to be both appropriate and effective.

Model Components

Intake: Ideally, the first interview will: evaluate the individual's immediate needs and career interests; compile education and job history; gather information on barriers to employment and ability to access education and training, and screen for eligibility for services, funding and other resources. When possible, the intake interview will also include working with the customer to identify potential effective learning modalities (learning styles, modes of instruction and training) or successful prior learning experiences.

Triage and Follow-up: Based on intake information, the navigator will evaluate a customer's need for support services, readiness to pursue education, training, employment (or a combination), and make appropriate referrals. The navigator will follow up with the participant or referral site to ensure smooth transition, or to redirect the customer if needed.

Assessment: Customers may enter career pathway programs at a level that makes sense for them, depending on their career readiness, while also taking advantage of multiple entry and exit points as they develop new skills. Assessment may vary, and can include standardized tests, criterion referencing, personal interviews, hands-on skill trials, and portfolios. Assessments should be tied to a credentialing process recognized by a targeted industry. The state approved basic skills assessment Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) aligns with the state's community and technical college system and many other service providers. This saves customers time and potential frustration that come with multiple tests. With CASAS, customers complete only one assessment before they begin basic skills training. A key piece of this assessment is determining whether an individual faces barriers to employment, and then identifying the services needed to reduce or eliminate those barriers.

Career and Education Exploration and Guidance: All customers, but especially those with little or no work experience, need sufficient information to make informed career decisions and education choices. By fully exploring their career and education options, customers are able to choose a career pathway based on their interests, needs, and capabilities. Career pathway exploration should include timely information about a wide range of occupations and whether they're in demand by local industry, connections to apprenticeship programs, and encouragement to consider non-traditional occupations for both women and men.

Customer Pathway and Outcome Plan: Every customer will work with staff to develop a plan with clear and measureable outcomes. Staff will facilitate conversations with customers to better understand their immediate needs, interests, passions, assets and current capabilities and experience, and career goals. Staff will then help customers develop education and career pathways and outcome plans, and provide necessary information and guidance along the way.

These plans are considered “living documents,” subject to change as customers learn more about new career and education options and discover new areas of interest and capacity.

Customer Navigation: Navigators provide guidance and mentoring to help customers who are often unfamiliar with the workforce system. For many, individual support is key to achieving success. Eventually, with navigation support and positive engagement in programs, customers are able to learn self-advocacy and problem-solving skills. This service model encourages single points of contact whenever possible, to eliminate the difficulties of transition from service to service. All WorkSource career center sites and affiliates will provide system navigation services.

Case Management: For individuals with barriers to employment, or any customers who need more support, career counseling and case management should be provided as they move through each stage of a program. Career counselors not only help with career and life choices, they assist customers during tough, transition points, increasing the likelihood of success. At a minimum, the career counselor/case manager provides stability and continuity, while offering encouragement and acknowledging successes. Ideally, customers should not be assigned more than one case manager. However, if necessary, case managers will work as a team to streamline and expedite services.

Support Services: A counselor/case manager can help customers overcome employment barriers by connecting them with needed support services. For many customers, career pathway success is directly linked to their ability to overcome significant barriers. A variety of social, medical, behavioral, economic, and other support services can help individuals overcome employment obstacles. These services, in tandem with occupational skill development and other career pathway components, enable individuals with barriers to land a job, and keep a job.

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST): Day-to-day living calls for literacy and numeracy skills, as do careers. Basic skills are needed across all occupations, both in landing a job and progressing within a career. Basic skills are also required for more advanced career-specific education and training. Evidence shows that I-BEST education, pioneered by Washington’s community and technical college system, improves and accelerates the attainment of important learning outcomes. This model, which blends basic skills training with occupational training, has been replicated and expanded in several other states.

(Contextualized) English Language Acquisition: English proficiency, including speaking, reading, writing, math, listening, and solving problems in technology-rich environments are required to

enter and progress within most occupations. Because evidence clearly indicates that contextualized English Language Acquisition improves and accelerates the attainment of desired learning outcomes, this is considered an optimal instruction method.

Work Readiness Instruction and Assessment: Work readiness measures an individual's preparedness for getting a job and keeping a job. With work readiness training, customers learn about the structure and culture of the workplace, and about what makes a valuable employee—beyond job-specific skills. Topics typically include communication skills, decision-making and problem-solving, team building and teamwork, following instructions, healthy relationships with authority figures, leadership skills, personal growth, stress management, health and hygiene, and dealing with difficult people and situations. Customers should be able to show through their attitude and behavior that they understand these concepts, rather than simply scoring well on a standardized test. Work readiness is best taught when embedded in an education or training program, not as a stand-alone component.

Development of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Job Entry: Skill development in this model refers not just to those skills needed to enter the field, but building skills that allow individuals to advance within the field. Wherever possible, skill development activities should be integrated with work. Models of work-integrated learning include: project-based learning in the classroom, online coursework, industry guest lecturers, or direct workplace experience, including job shadows, mentorships, internships (paid or unpaid), clinicals, cooperative learning models, and apprenticeships. Paid work experience or earn-and-learn models are optimal, but understandably the most difficult to achieve and sustain. Where possible, industry credentials should be integrated into job-entry programs, demonstrating competencies and reducing hiring costs for business partners. Skill development activities should be appropriate to the learning styles, interests and capabilities of each customer. Early intake and assessments will help determine the appropriate pathway and point of entry for each customer.

Skills Upgrading for Occupational Advancement: Skills upgrading refers to development of skills beyond entry-level (first employment during program participation). Skills upgrading should be tied to an industry-recognized credential, whenever possible. Industry credentials should include college credits so customers can more readily add and build on their education to help them move up the career ladder.

Business Engagement, Job Development, and Placement: Successfully connecting customers with jobs requires working with businesses to determine which jobs are currently available, or projected to become available, along with the skill requirements for these jobs. Engaging businesses and sharing labor market data will better inform curriculum development, support

work-integrated activities, enhance program offerings, and assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the program in meeting industry need. Staff responsible for job development and placement, and faculty responsible for curriculum development and delivery, will need to work closely with industry representatives to ensure skill development curriculum and materials are directly applicable to the workplace, and that participants are adequately prepared to meet the needs of business once on the job. This is an ongoing, fluid process. Curriculum may need to be modified or enhanced as new jobs become available or if participants are unable to perform effectively on the job.

Post-Job Placement Support for the Participant and Employer: Landing a job is often just the first step for customers, even if they have benefited from effective pre-placement services. Once on the job they may struggle with child or elder care, transportation, interpersonal issues, family difficulties, medical needs, basic skills development, and court involvement. Or, an individual may require additional skill development in specific areas to improve job performance or to keep pace with industry changes. Support services for program participants and the businesses who hire them may involve: periodic contact, information and referral for necessary services, and, when necessary, advocacy for the individual on the job.

Workforce System Should be Resource to Educators and Business

Ultimately, the workforce system should serve as a go-to resource for both industry and educators by supplying both with timely information about labor market trends, wage expectations, training opportunities for new and existing workers, and retention strategies. See Chapter # for more about Business Engagement.

Replication of Promising Practices

Adopting a streamlined customer service and an integrated services delivery model does not mean that Washington must reinvent the wheel. In many instances, the state leads the nation in education and training programs, in performance accountability, and in service delivery. As this plan has been developed, program partners and stakeholders have identified many examples where this is evident.

The following list is a compilation of partner programs and models that have proven to get good results in their programmatic areas. They are valuable resources in this new effort to foster integrated service delivery:

- **Labor–Management Committees** are formed during major closures and facilitate coordination between labor and business representatives, the workforce system and

community partners. These committees are often the platform for pursuing Trade Adjustment Assistance, National Emergency Grants or other forms of funding to assist transition.

- **Peer Outreach** contracts place workers from an affected group, during closure, on-site in WorkSource offices to offer support and ease the transition to training, job search and/or relocation activities, as appropriate. These individuals offer the emotional and motivational support necessary to assist a community in recovery from a major layoff event.
- **Transition Centers** serving specific workgroups offer a tailored space to serve large impacted workgroups. Based on individual circumstances, these centers may be implemented within a One-Stop office or nearby location. *(An example is the Simpson Lumber Mill closure in 2015. Through a Labor-Management Committee, the company was certified for Trade Adjustment Assistance and two Peer Outreach Workers were funded to staff a Transition Center, alongside workforce system partners, in the office space next door to the Shelton WorkSource Center.)* These techniques are most often implemented when workers are represented by a union, but can be replicated more broadly as a promising practice in an Integrated Service Delivery model.
- **Centers of Excellence** are flagship institutions located at Washington's community and technical colleges that focus on a targeted industry and are built upon a reputation for fast, flexible, quality education and training programs. (A targeted industry is identified as one that is strategic to the economic growth of a region or state.) Centers are guided by industry representatives to lead collaborative and coordinated statewide education and training efforts to build a competitive workforce in a global economy.
- **Bachelors in Applied Science degrees** create expanded opportunities for both students and businesses by providing the upper-division coursework at community and technical colleges in an applied field. These degrees, many of them online and tailored to working adults, build upon professional-technical associate degrees.
- **Professional Technical I-BEST** co-enrolls students in adult basic education and college credit-bearing career pathways that lead to living wage jobs. I-BEST accelerates students down their career pathway, by contextualizing and team teaching the language, math, and other foundational skills needed to succeed in their professional-technical program. I-BEST students are nine times more likely to earn a workforce credential than students in traditional basic education programs.
- **Industry DACUM** is a process, facilitated by a Center of Excellence or community college, that incorporates the use of a business or industry focus group to capture the major duties and related tasks included in an occupation, as well as the necessary knowledge, skills, and traits. This cost-effective method provides a quick and thorough analysis of any job.

- **Industry Skill Panels** are public/private partnerships of business, labor, and education working together to improve the skills of workers in industries vital to Washington's economy. Washington has worked with Industry Skill Panels since 2000.
- **Workforce Program Review** is a community college review of a vocational education program's intent and objectives. Industry representatives participate on evaluations teams that look at: program accomplishments, student performance standards compared to the needs of industry, facility adequacy as a training site, quantity and quality of graduates, and job placements. This review team then makes recommendations for any identified program improvements or innovations.
- **Community and Technical College Workforce Program Advisory Boards** are long standing, with private sector business and labor representatives serving as advisors to the college programs, providing: advocacy, curriculum recommendations, and support for quality professional-technical education programs.
- **Industry showcases** are regular events that highlight how industry skills are put to use in the work world. They serve as an example of how community and technical colleges are responsive to the changing needs of businesses.
- **Professional Technical Expansion I-BEST** allows students to move further and faster down their career pathway by putting English and math courses in context, as needed for longer-term certificate and degree programs. This allows students to skip developmental education and earn their college or terminal-level English and math credits through contextualization and team teaching.
- **Academic I-BEST** co-enrolls students in adult basic education and Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) courses for students intending to earn a transfer degree. Through Academic I-BEST, adult education students can accelerate their progress down a transfer career pathway and reduce or eliminate time spent in developmental education.
- **I-BEST at Work** is based upon a partnership between a community college or community-based organization, and an employer, in which the college or organization provides a basic skills instructor who team-teaches with a representative from the employer. It is part of the comprehensive I-BEST Pathway, designed to accelerate basic skills students within the context of work for incumbent workers.
- **HS 21+** allows students 21 and older to attain a competency-based high school diploma. The program awards credit for prior learning, military training, and work experience.
- **I-DEA** Integrated Digital English Acceleration is an on-ramp to I-BEST that is in collaboration with the Gates Foundation and provides the lowest level ESL students with a laptop computer with half of the instruction online with 24/7 access to learning.

Summary and Goals

In conclusion, a truly integrated service delivery system holds promise for Washington's workforce by helping people reach their goals no matter their barriers, their background, or where they entered the system. The following goals will help move Washington's system forward:

- *Increase the number of designated navigators available within the One-Stop system.*
- *Develop an intake process that eliminates redundant assessments and streamlines customer experience.*
- *Increase the number of participants, including those with barriers, who have defined career pathways and have gained portable skills, received industry recognized credentials, and/or earned college credits.*

Soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Board to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. *Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.*
2. *Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, including through apprenticeships.*
3. *Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.*